

THE ELECTION PROCESS

VOTERS KNOW-HOW



Published in public interest by



Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI)

and



Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)

Community Health Cell
Library and Documentation Unit
BANGALORE

COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
No. 367, Srinivasa Nilaya, Jakkasandra,
I Main, I Block, Koramangala, Bangalore - 560 034.

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New Delhi - 110 016, INDIA

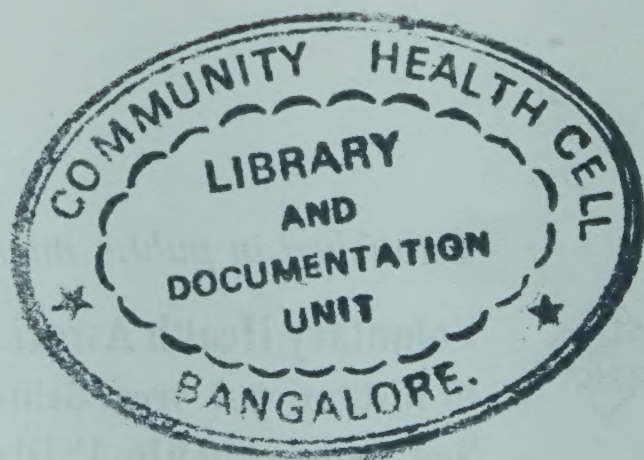
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PREFACE

The Constitution of India provides an opportunity to all adult citizens of India to choose their representatives. This is a statutory right granted under the Representation of the Peoples Act. It encompasses a number of civil and political rights in order to help people to effectively exercise their right to vote. The role of a voter is of utmost significance in India. But due to number of maladies that exist in election management a sizable number of voters are not in a position to participate effectively in the electoral process. Recognising the voters rights and the need for making them aware of the election process, VHAI and VANI have decided to bring out a series of booklets and posters with a view to educate and sensitise voters about election laws and rules, code of conduct, etc., and mobilise them to play a positive role in the electoral reform process. This booklet is the first step towards it.

This booklet is based on the basic information provided by the Election Commission Publication titled — “Maladies in Election Management System” and other materials. We hope that through our efforts the voters would get an opportunity to know and exercise their basic rights.

We at VHAI and VANI are thankful to the Election Commission which has recognised weaknesses in the election

management, which in turn enabled us to take this step. We are also thankful to all those who have given their valuable suggestions and comments.

A combined effort by all those working at VHAI and VANI has made it possible to make it a reality. The text of this booklet has been prepared by Seema Gaikwad, Anil K. Singh of VANI and Dr. Yash Chauhan, a freelance journalist.

This booklet is published in public interest.

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INTRODUCTION

The Independent India witnessed a vast change to the society. It adopted a constitution which elaborated upon the rules regarding choosing a leader. The Independence gave the people of India universal adult franchise. The right to vote covers many civil and political rights in order to help people to effectively exercise their right to vote. Thus, voters play a significant role in a democracy. A democracy is based upon their awareness, knowledge and understanding. The citizens of India select the office-holders for the organised community through an election. The Indian voters have played a significant role. In the history of India, the voters have proved that they cannot be won by any type of bribes. But sometimes the election system takes such turns that the voters become a playcard. The voters are debarred from casting their votes either because of the weaknesses in the system of election or they fall prey in wrong hands. The selfish politicians always look at the weakness in the election process so as to use it to achieve their self-interest. Realising the effects of a weak election system, there have been discussion on the improvement in the election process and there have been many suggestion as well. Successive election commissions have given their own suggestions and recommendations which strongly establishes that there are certainly some maladies in the election management in India. Withstanding

the need of a real change and the importance of a voter's knowledge this time the Election Commission has taken out a roll which outlines the boundaries of the election process. In this roll the maladies or weaknesses that are witnessed at different phases i.e. - Pre-election, during the election and Post-election are outlined. This roll gives us an opportunity to know and understand an election better.

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PREPARATION OF ELECTORAL ROLLS

The electoral rolls are prepared and revised with reference to a qualifying date. The electoral rolls are now being non-intensively revised every year so that the same are kept up-to-date and the latest rolls are available for any election. Thus, one copy of each such revised electoral roll for every constituency has to be kept as a permanent record. Though the preparation of electoral rolls is the first and most important aspect in an election process, it is sad to notice the lapses in the procedure. Let us discuss what leads to the existence of weaknesses in preparing an electoral roll.

01 Inadequate publicity of rolls revision programme

It is often seen that common people are ignorant about the preparation and revision of an electoral roll. The temporarily employed officials such as government servants or school teachers for emuneration don't always visit each and every house and gather all necessary informations. They rather make some correction in the electoral rolls which are supposed to be revised. Thus, their insincerity put the names of common mass away from the roll. The voters sometimes do not register their names in the electoral rolls because of lack of information. They do not have the knowledge that they can otherwise

go and register their names in the election commission itself. Thus, the lack of information regarding election process and the importance of a vote make the common disinterested at the time of registration. It is the duty of the enumerator to enter the names of people of every household in the electoral rolls. The citizens must be told about the importance of an electoral roll. Thus adequate publicity must be made about the revision of rolls.

02 Exclusion of working voters not found at home

In India, especially, in rural areas it is a very common thing that men go to work and women stay back doing the house-hold chores. Thus, it is usually seen that the housewives and the children are available at homes when the enumerator comes for the registration of the names. The male members of the families are out at work. This puts an enumerator in a difficult position to obtain all the information such as age and also the names of such people are not included in the rolls. According to the rule an enumerator must obtain all the information in detail and must cover all the households. But the enumerator does not bother to visit these houses again some other time.

03 Apathy of political parties

The political parties who are the centre of gravity in the election process do not show any interest in the preparation of the electoral roll. Rather they are more concerned about how to influence people through their own process of election campaigning. And if any party shows some interest in this, it is seen that they do it to include their supporters' names in the roll. Some selfish parties even try to delete the names of the people of their

opposition parties. Sometimes there are instances where a whole area of village is omitted from the list.

04 Mushrooming of J.J. colonies before the enumeration

Generally people from villages migrate to the towns in search of jobs and try to settle down in J.J. Colonies. Because of this there is an increasing rate of population and number in J.J. Colonies in these towns every year. So the problem arises when the time for registration of these areas comes as people are not traced because they tend to move from one place to another. The enumerators do not take pains to visit these areas and the people of that area do not show any interest in registering their names as they are ignorant of the importance of an election.

05 Fictitious enumerations

It is really a difficult task to prepare a roll with the correct names of the voters in a vast country like India. Normally self interest people try to enter the wrong names in the roll and sometimes names of the eligible voters remain unlisted from the roll. Sometimes the whole area is also left out from the list. The problems of foreign nationals, non-resident Indians also come into the limelight. Sometimes the names of minors and also the dead are included in the list. Some names are repeated in the list and the informations regarding the voters is wrongly put. It is important to avoid such things because this might cause inconvenience to a number of people.

06 Non-availability of competent officers

Normally school teachers and government officials are

employed temporarily to collect all kinds of informations and prepare the electoral rolls. Since this is a temporary occupation for them and there is no commitment from the higher office, they do not work sincerely. The officers superior to them also maintain a clever attitude towards the work. Thus, there is always a lack of efficient officers and workers with the Election Commission. This problem can be solved if they are given proper training and solid commitment. But there are no specific provisions available now towards this. The attitude of commitment towards the work has to be imbibed within these people.

07 Non publication of draft rolls in polling stations

Though there is a provision to publish the draft rolls in each polling stations, it is often seen missing. As a result of this the common people do not get to know whether his or her name is on the draft rolls. He/she does not try to register his/her name (as a result) because of ignorance and thus he/she loses his right to vote. This leads to impersonation as the various interest groups become active to capture a vote.

08 Non availability of forms for claims and objections

A voter can fill up a form (form no. 6) of objections or claims if his or her name is wrongly entered in the list. For this there is a provision but generally forms are not actually available at the time of need. It is baseless to raise objections verbally as verbal objections are not recorded by the officers. Even if the objections are recorded in the forms special attention is not given and a solution is brought half-heartedly. The hostile attitude

of officers responsible for registration makes it difficult for the voters to get anything solved. To avoid any sort of problems the proper forms should be made available easily.

09 Unreliable citizenship documents

Many voters do not have reliable documents to prove their citizenship. The inquiry in the absence of these documents takes a long time. Sometimes foreign nationals are included in the rolls and it is difficult to trace them. Some provisions are needed to be made either to inquire the document on citizenship of voters or to issue a citizenship (authentic) card to each voter.

10 Non availability of appellate officers

If there are any mistakes or confusions concerning the electoral rolls or if any body complains then he or she wants to appeal in the appellate office, this is not an easy job. As the appellate officer is not accessible easily the voters have to go through a lot of difficulties finding him. Sometimes the voters don't even have the information about the existence of an appellate officer. In the consequence he/she can't make an appeal and the election is conducted with the wrong electoral rolls.

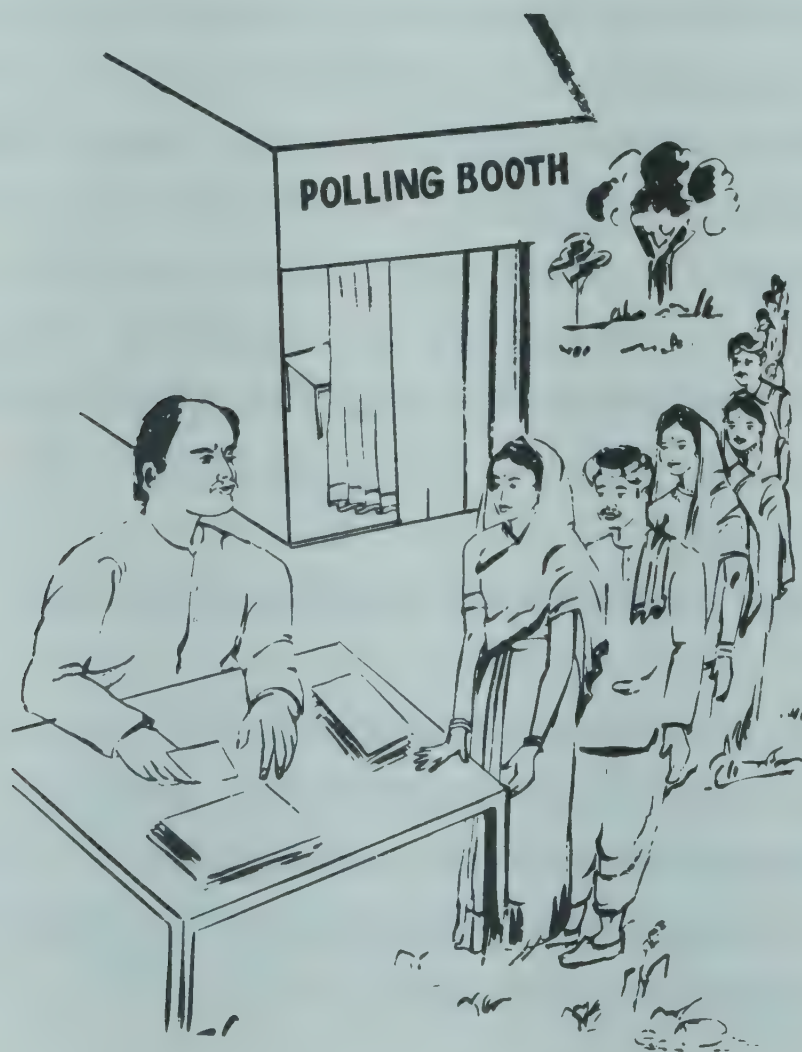
11 Duplicate registration in disputed areas

The enumerators sometimes hesitate to go to a disputed area because of fear from various spheres. At the same time they cannot omit the whole area. Thus duplication is done. Generally it is found that a duplicate registration is made in disputed areas.

12 Faulty updating of last part of rolls

The preparation of electoral rolls takes a long time. The roll is updated every time before election takes place in an area. This requires a lot of hard work as it involves visiting people regularly and collecting informations. The enumerator avoids to do such hard work and thus the last part of electoral rolls are not (corrected) updated. The enumerator updates it on his own rather than putting the fact.

Thus, a sincere commitment towards the work on part of the enumerator, proper training of these people may help in improving the situation. It is the duty of officials and citizens who are aware to make the common mass aware of the importance of an electoral roll. Since the electoral roll is the most basic thing which enables a person to cast a vote, it should be the concern of each individual..



SETTING UP OF POLLING STATIONS

The polling stations are supposed to be set up keeping in view the convenience of voters, election officials and above all the safety of the place. There are many things which can affect the voting and one of them is the situation of the booth. Though India has witnessed elections for several times now, not a single election has passed off incident free. The badly situated polling booths can be a cause of disturbance. Let us look at the areas where there is a lack of proper placing of polling booths.

01 Polling stations for weaker sections

Generally weaker sections are vulnerable and thus are liable to get motivated and pressurised by influential people of the area easily. The influential bit take advantage of this and as a result this affect the casting of votes. In this framework a number of problems arise when a separate polling station is not set up for the weaker sections. Thus, it is advisable to set up separate polling station for the weaker section in their own localities. This would not only help avoiding the disturbance but also would be favourable for people.

02 Location of polling station at a distance beyond prescription

According to the rules of the commission a distance is

demarcated for setting up of a polling booth. But it is not practised. Generally the polling stations are set up in such a way that voters find it difficult in reaching the booth. As a result the voters stay away from exercising their franchise. Attention must be given towards the setting up of the booth. A polling station should be situated in such a place which is suitable for the election officers and voters also.

03 A number of polling stations in the same building

Large houses or big buildings take the look of a typical election office at the time of polling because a number of polling stations are set up at such buildings. In such places it is normal for the voters to face a lot of difficulty in identifying their polling booth and there is every possibility of overlapping of votes. It is wrong from the administrative point of view.

04 Last minute change in polling station

The change of polling station in the last minute leads to a thin percentage in polling. This creates a havoc among the voters. The last minute change confuses the voters. This confusion can be avoided if the polling stations are changed before-hand and the voters are informed well before the polls.

05 Proximity of polling stations to political offices

As a rule the office of any party or any candidate should be 200 meters away from the polling stations. But this is not maintained. If the political offices are near the polling stations, there is every chance of motivation coming from the political parties or candidates in the

fray. They can create problems for some voters and can go upto the extent of promoting forged voting. They can also try and motivate the election officers, engaged in the polling stations.

06 Temporary structures leading to vitiation

It is often seen that polling stations are set up in a tent or in a makeshift room. This is done when a concrete construction is not available. These types of polling stations are at danger all the time. There is every fear of stealing of ballot boxes, impersonation of votes in such places. Efforts must be made to set up permanent polling stations where there is safety and security rather than having make-shift arrangements.

Thus, setting up of polling booths play a significant role in an election. Since it affects the polling these must be set up wisely and must be convenient to everybody.

Once in a day introspect on factors that are threatening the rule of law in our democracy — co-relate them to the extent true, with the electoral system and the built in difficulties to elect responsive and honest representatives and sustain their responsiveness.

— *Election Commission*

MALADIES BEFORE POLLING

The pre-election phase plays a crucial role in an election process. This is the time when most of the important work is done. The officials are given orientations. Various political parties become active and start working towards achieving their self-interest. Though this is the phase when a base/platform is built, many manipulative tactics are followed by different people at different places. Here we have discussed a few which are most commonly found.

01 Transfers of inconvenient officers and posting of pliable officers on key positions

The practice of transfers and appointments of favorable officers is an old practice by the ruling party. The ruling party appoints the favorable officers before the election so as to get their work done effortlessly. In this situation there is a possibility of creating problems at the time of election. The Returning Officers and District Election Officer are also transferred to places suitable to the party in power so as to avail the unnecessary services easily. The officers who are rigid in their principles are transferred to difficult places as they do not fall into the hands of the leaders.

02 Inauguration of new schemes and projects just before the election

The ruling party brings out new projects and schemes just before the election. The motive behind this is to motivate the voters. Even the opposition party starts new schemes to catch the attention of the voters. Apart from this the projects (which started earlier) are delayed and postponed till the election time so that it will be fresh in voters mind and they believe that it will be a beneficial factor in grabbing votes. Fresh schemes come to the limelight just before the election.

03 Dummy candidates

Various parties put up dummy candidates to distribute the votes. Sometimes in the last minute the dummy candidate's candidature is canceled or withdrawn by the party itself. These withdrawals are made in exchange of money. Sometimes it also happens that the candidates withdraw their candidature in favour of their own party. Thus their votes get transferred to their own party candidates. This thing is seen in almost every election. At the same time the agents of dummy candidates play an important role in influencing the polling and counting stations.

04 Prevention of nomination of weak candidates

The adult citizens of India who fulfill the requirements to contest election in an independent country like India. It is often seen that some people come to the election ground to contest election non-seriously but rather to get some profit or to achieve some self interest. A number of problems arise out of this practice. In India, where the

rate of illiteracy is high, this system creates a bad impact in the election process. It is difficult to stop such candidates and in this process there is a chance that the election process is affected. This is mainly done by the people who are not really confident and are weak.

05 Bribery and horse trading

Cases of bribery are often heard during an election. Parties bribe candidates to bring them to their side. These types of incidences before the election affects the performance of the opposition parties in the election. There are incidents that a person changes his party just before the nomination. This is practiced either to catch an influential person or where the party does not have a proper candidate to nominate.

06 Hesitation of good persons to join the fray

As we see there are many people who are famous for working among people for their upliftment and development. They are respected among common people. But they prefer to stay away from the politics. They stay away because of certain reasons such as use of muscle and money power in an election. Generally such people spend their lives working for people but do not prefer to represent people in the assembly or parliament. This may be because of the existing and increasing corruption in the election process that good people are not stepping into the politics. In the process we lose the opportunity of the service of good people.

07 Caste/community based selection of candidates

The caste and community have made such a drastic entry

into the politics now that the candidates are even selected by the political parties on the basis of caste and religion. Different parties fall into the competition of caste and community feelings. This is not only a danger to the process but also to the common people who are supposed to form the government.

08 Nomination of party candidates on death bed with a view to have the election countermanded

This is practiced as an instrument to cancel the election. The person who is seriously ill is nominated so that if he/she dies during the election process, it would create sympathy for his party. This can attract sympathy votes. Normally a person from the family of the dead is nominated for the election. This makes certain for that person to win the election. In this way the political parties do not hesitate to practice such methods to capture some votes.

09 Nomination with forged signature of proposer

Normally the forged signatures of the proposer are put in the nomination forms if the proposer is not located and thus the rules and regulations of the election process is violated. There is no provision available to punish this forgery case.

10 Multiple nomination from more than one constituency

There are incidents that a candidate files his/her nominations paper from more than one places. This is prevalent in our election process. But this makes an election more extravagant. Suppose a candidate has filed

his/her nominations from more than one place and wins in more than one place. After winning he/she is supposed to resign from the other constituencies and retain only one. Thus another election has to be held for the other place so as to choose a representative. This means extra expenses. Sometimes a person contests from a place he/she is not familiar with. In this case he/she has the possibility of winning if he/she has a name or his party is unknown in the area.

11 Staggering of elections due to shortage of police forces

The elections are scheduled keeping in view various things. The police play a vital role in maintaining law and order and security during election. They are deployed in a polling area to keep a vigil on the law and order situations of the areas. Many times the elections have to be staggered due to shortage of police forces. The election commission is unable to hold the election at all the places simultaneously because of the shortage in the police force.



Lodge complaints/prosecution against illegal acts as per relevant law.

THE PERIOD OF ELECTIONEERING

The period of electioneering witnesses a lot of expenditures and use and misuse of government machinaries is done. Even the help of musclemen is taken without any hesitance. We have made an attempt here to discuss some of the aspects which affect the election process and are hardly realised by those who claim to serve the people.

01 Wasteful election expenses

In our country countless expenses are made during the elections. The use of vehicles, big cut-outs, posters, distribution of shawl, blankets, sarees, liquor are prevalent and largely seen during an election. This is done to motivate the common mass. The amount of money spent in this process is sometimes more than crores in one constituency. The parties fail to realise that this money can be used for better purposes. The general opinion among party people is that the larger amount one spends on election, the better it is. Unfortunately, this is true to some extent. It is morally and legally wrong to spend more than a specific amount at the time of election. Steps have been taken to strengthen the rules of the election commission regarding this but it needs to be more rigid.

02 Non accounting of expenditure of political parties

Nobody really bothers to keep an account of the expenditure made during the election. Even if one wants to, it is difficult. Because a large amount of money used in the election is black money which is contributed by rich industrialists and other influential people who have some or the other self interest. This money is collected and spent in such ways that sometimes the candidate does not even get a track of its expenditure. The rule that each candidate has to give a detailed account of daily expenditure is a welcome feature from the election commission this time.

03 Misuse of personal security staff

During the election the candidates misuse their personal security staff and threaten the other party or people or all rather than protecting themselves from any kind of evils. They use them in creating violence and disturbances. The 'goonda' element is encouraged by them. Hard rules must be made for these kind of people to curb all the misuse of the security staff.

04 Intimidation of voters and candidates

In a country like India where money and muscle power are on the rise in election process it is difficult for the weaker section to cast their votes fearlessly. They have to face all sorts of threats and pressures which come from different parties. The parties can go up to the extent of putting an entire area in difficulty if they come to know that the particular area is against them. Sometimes pressure is applied on opposition candidates to withdraw

the nomination. In this way many candidates are debarred from contesting the election.

05 Mobilisation of musclemen

The local 'dadas' of an area become active during the election time. Most of the candidates desire that as many dadas as possible should be with them. They do not hesitate to spend money towards mobilising the musclemen towards them. It is seen that some candidates try hard to bring the musclemen out of jail (by owning any method) with the hope that they (the candidates) will be secured and these dadas capture booths. It is very common that an election witnesses disturbances/ violence like shoot outs, beatings and various other things. The musclemen are employed by different parties. These musclemen do not have a commitment towards any candidate. They only run after money. Thus they stick to the candidates who gives/offers more money.

06 Creating disturbance in public meetings

The election process includes holding of different public gatherings/meetings by different parties. The party people take to disturbance and try to create problems in public meetings if it is organised by an opposition party. They put their own people in the meeting so as to do the hooting. They do not hesitate to use all sorts of methods to spread disturbance and violence.

07 Defacement of party poster, arches etc.

Various party candidates find pleasure in tearing of the posters and banners of their opposition parties. This is

done mostly during the night. They even exchange the posters of the opposition and replacing with other posters. Defacement of the posters of the opposition is done. These posters do not give any clue as who has done that. Sometimes posters depicts the conflict between various parties.

08 Communal and caste based electioneering

Communalism and casteism have become an indispensable part of an election. A candidate is elected on the basis of caste and communalism. It is often seen that if a particular caste is dominating in a locality then a person of that particular caste is nominated to contest the election. Election campaigning is also made on the theme of caste and religion. They make it a point to use it in election matters. Rules must be made to keep these kinds of people out who advocate religion and caste during election and divide people on caste and religion line.

09 VIP's visits on so called official business

Different parties arrange official tours of VIPs for campaigning so as to influence and mobilise people towards them. Inauguration of some bridge, hospitals or roads by some minister just before the election is very common and a normal activity that is often seen. This behaves as a favour for party candidate. This is illegal and wrong but people take advantage of the malades of the election management.

10 Misuse of Government property in election

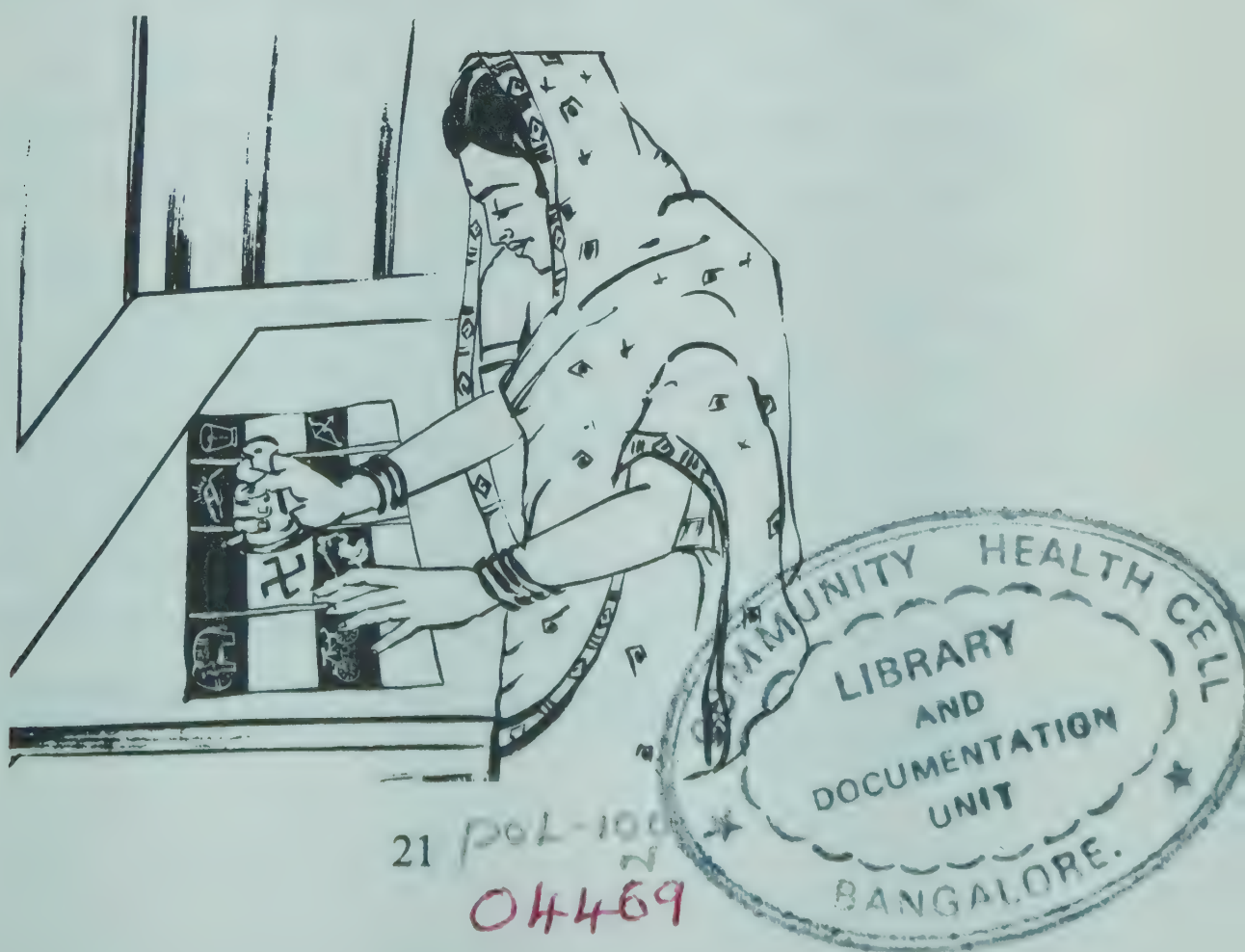
The use of government guest houses in various states by the ruling party is very common. When election meetings

are held in parks and public places little attention is given towards its consequences. Apart from this the aircrafts and other government vehicles are used by the ruling party as if it is their right. All the expenses incurred due to this is paid by the government itself.

11 Indiscriminate use of loudspeakers and other instrument

In India an election cannot be imagined without a loudspeaker. But it is used so badly that it affects the peace and harmony of the society. It is used even late in the night. Late night meetings are held where the loudspeakers are used, as a result it disturbs the public. As a rule a loudspeaker must not be used after 11 p.m. but the police or any other government officials do not take any step to stop this.

As we have seen from the above discussion there is a lot to be done to bring the election system and keep an election free from any kind of fear, violence and disturbances.



DAY OF POLL

The election process reaches a crucial point on the day of poll. The excitement and enthusiasm among voters are easily noticed when they eagerly come to cast their votes. Sometimes there is a disgusting look as well. Since there are many untoward incidents that take place during the voting, let us look at few of them generally.

01 Forcible booth capturing

Booth capturing has become a significant system in our election process. This happens in rural areas mostly where the people are not really aware of these things and the police is not active also. It is noticed that under-developed areas have a higher rate of booth capturing. The poor people who are ignorant of the tick mark are forced to on a particular symbol by the musclemen. The polling officers are helpless in this situation as they re-main as mute observes. It so happens that when people come to cast their votes they are told that they have already exercised their franchise. Their innocence and ignorance do not allow them to raise their voice. Sometimes booths are captured secretly by bribing or threatening the election officers. Sometimes people are collected so that possible voters of the opposition party are kept away from casting their votes.

02 Immobilisation of police forces and central observers

The polling agents of the political party try and create various situations so as to attract the voters towards them. This makes the police inactive and the central observers can not do their work effectively. Sometimes tricks are played to dissuade the police forces from keeping a vigil on the polling station such as violence in other areas so that police and observers kept away for that partner policy booth.

03 Misuse of vehicles

There is no such rule that the voters would be taken to the polling stations and dropped back at home on the day of the poll. Vehicles are not supposed to be used for this purposes. But the vehicles are seen to be used for this purpose during the poll. The different parties practice this so as to influence the voters.

04 Impersonation

In our country impersonation is practiced widely but a few cases really come to the limelight. This is done generally in the early hours on the day of the polling so as to refuse the actual voters to cast their votes. Generally or normally the Indian voters are calm in nature. They do not prefer to set up an inquiry and thus do not give a written complaint. Sometimes the representatives of the candidates also do not say anything on impersonation. In the absence of local polling agent who can recognise voters this can be done easily.

05 Misuse of media for electioneering

Different media, especially the government media are

misused during the election. The ruling party candidate try to transmit the news and message about the work they and the government have done. Various leaders can be seen very often on T.V. during the election. Newspapers also play a vital role. The candidates try and put negative remarks and news of their opposite group so as to create a bad impression of their opposition among the mass. This destroys the unbiased reputation of the media and makes the voters thoroughly confused. Thus the voters become indecisive as to whom to vote.

06 Misuse of law and order machinery

The ruling party candidates in different states and even in the center use the law and order machinery in favour of their candidate during the election. For example, drawing out the police from the area where there is possibility of disturbance by their candidates and by becoming rigid with the opposition candidate and in the areas where the disturbances will act as a favour towards the election. The law is violated by the party members themselves. The party people provoke the common man against their opposition.

07 Misuse of illicit arms and ammunition

One of the main reasons of violence during the election is procurement of illicit arms and ammunition. In some states the supporters of each candidate own arms illegally. These are collected very secretly before the election. The different political parties have such stronghold in the process of selling and buying of weapons that the administration cannot do anything. The news of raids by the police on the arms and ammunition is heard but this is just a little proportion to what actually is hidden.

08 Misuse of licensed weapons

There are people who have acquired licensed weapons. These people are contacted by different political parties with a purpose of chancing upon the weapons. Sometimes they succeed in their process and thus licensed weapons are misused. Generally administration order for deposition of fire arms but due to political influence ruling party people ignored and administration kept close eyes.

09 Ministers as polling agents

Polling agents are recruited at different polling stations. The representatives of the political parties are put on the desks. But sometimes the ministers are seen as polling agents. This can create a favorable wave for the party he/she belongs to - thus influencing the people.

Since the above incidents are illegal, strong action must be taken against those who try and create disturbances. The voters must be kept away from any kind of pressure.

Boycott political meetings in which black money and official machinery is used.

DISTURBANCE DURING THE COUNTING

Counting being an important aspect, a slight negligence may lead to unprecedented events. Proper attention is most needed during the counting. Though there is a lot of care already taken there are still a lot to be done.

01 Wrongful/biased objection of votes

The polling officers sometimes are biased and accept or reject the ballot papers arbitrarily. They do it because they have an intention behind this. The acceptance and rejection of votes/ballots sometimes affect the final result of the election. Besides this, wrong entry in the report is also noticed. Sometimes the last minute recruitment of counting agents also create problems. Sometimes ministers are recruited as counting agents also. In this situation the ministers influence the other officers as counting officers.

02 Manipulated entry in the result-sheet

Sometimes it is found that election officials manipulate the entry on result sheet. The hearing of election disputes gets delayed in the court. This itself is a long process. A lot of time is wasted in this process and the effect of this

does not remain powerful. The election commission is kept away from this process. A thorough inquiry is not done in this and the lost candidates cases are not dealt properly. It is taken for granted that the opposition candidate has lost the elections and any allegation against him/her is not justifiable.

03 Improper storage and preservation of polled materials and records

The polling records are not kept and maintained properly. Sometimes important papers are destroyed and thus no record is maintained regarding that. The materials and other things used in an election process are not maintained properly and scientifically. By this the problem of arranging the materials all over again come up and this costs a lot of money.

04 Crowding of counting centres

The counting process puts people in excitement and thus it is seen that usually the counting centres are found to be crowded. Sometimes some of them make an entry to the counting hall itself. It creates a lot of problem for the counting agents and the other officers deployed for counting of votes and there to look after the law and order situation.

Discourage the frivolous and non-serious proxy candidates to protect the dignity of election.

REPOLL AND ADJOURNED POLL

01 Biased recommendations for repoll

Repolling is done when there is a problem with the polling and a case is filed. But sometimes polling officials recommendations are biased and made by different influential leaders to conduct another election in different areas. This is done when there is a fair chance of their winning the battle.

02 Reuse of missing ballot papers for repoll

Instead of making fresh ballot papers for the repolling, the old ballot papers are used - thus violating the election rules as a whole. The missing ballot papers are put into use. This is done to favour some party candidates.

Mobilise honest citizens into organised groups — To exert systematic pressures on honest and forthright citizens only to come into the election arena — To thwart in an organised manner, injustice, corruption, and abuse of law and let rule of law prevail.

POST ELECTION MALADIES

01 Victimization of forthright officers

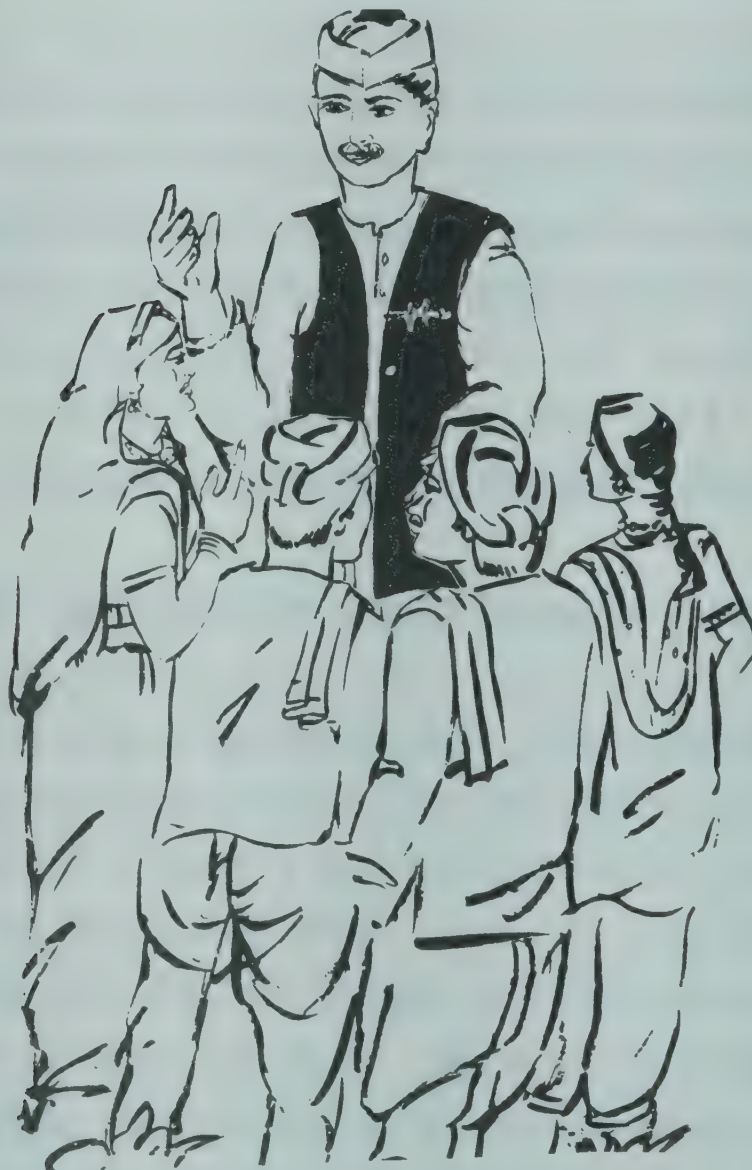
The maladies in election do not just confirm to the pre-election and election era, it rather continues after the election also. If any officer has been forthright during the election he/she faces a lot of problems after the election. The officers fall victims of the party who comes to power. They are transferred to problem areas or are given such posts which do not have any power.

02 Non-prosecution of cases of electoral offenses

The disturbances and violences are not given due importance once the election is over and also the booth capturing incidents are not properly investigated once the election is over. The problem craters of the previous election are seen to be creating problems in the next election as well. But no step is taken to stop them. An election in a particular area is counter-manded only when there is proper and solid reason. Sometimes the proofs and all kinds of facts are not needed to cancel polling. This happens if an influential party wants it.

03 Past election reprisals against voters and areas

If a candidate loses the election from a place but his or her party comes to power, he takes a revengful attitude towards the area where he was defeated. He/she neither looks at the developmental work in the area nor pays any attention to the complaints of the people of that area. Some candidates who win in the election show a cold attitude towards the people from whom they did not get the vote. This attitude is also maintained towards a particular community and caste sometimes.



Collect and Disseminate maximum possible information about successful and stable democracies in the world.

MANIPULATIVE TACTICS OF THE RULING PARTY

01 Pre-election period

The ruling party starts the preparation to gain in the election well before the election. First the workers working for preparing the electoral rolls are manipulated by the party and the names of the voters who are against them are omitted from the roll. The officers who do not agree with the returning officer are transferred and thus the path is cleared. The police is misused by the ruling party to achieve their self-interest. Parole is granted to favourite musclemen by the ruling party so that they can be used in the election process. The government officers are given benefit such as bonus, pay increase etc. before the election so as to motivate them towards the ruling party.

02 During the poll

The ruling party uses the government machinery to the fullest during the election. Government vehicles are used to reach up to the voters, government officials are also used in the election process and favorable officers are recruited for the election work. By this the ruling party holds a upper hand in manipulating the other polling officers and also the common people.

03 Misuse of Presidential Rule

The ruling party prefers to use the presidential rule as an instrument to catch vote if a state is under it. The presidential rule is lingered till the condition is in favour of the ruling party. The ruling party has the authority to impose a presidential rule. The ruling party sometimes portray the opposition against the interest of the people of the area.



Organise non-violent collective action against corruption.

MISCELLANEOUS

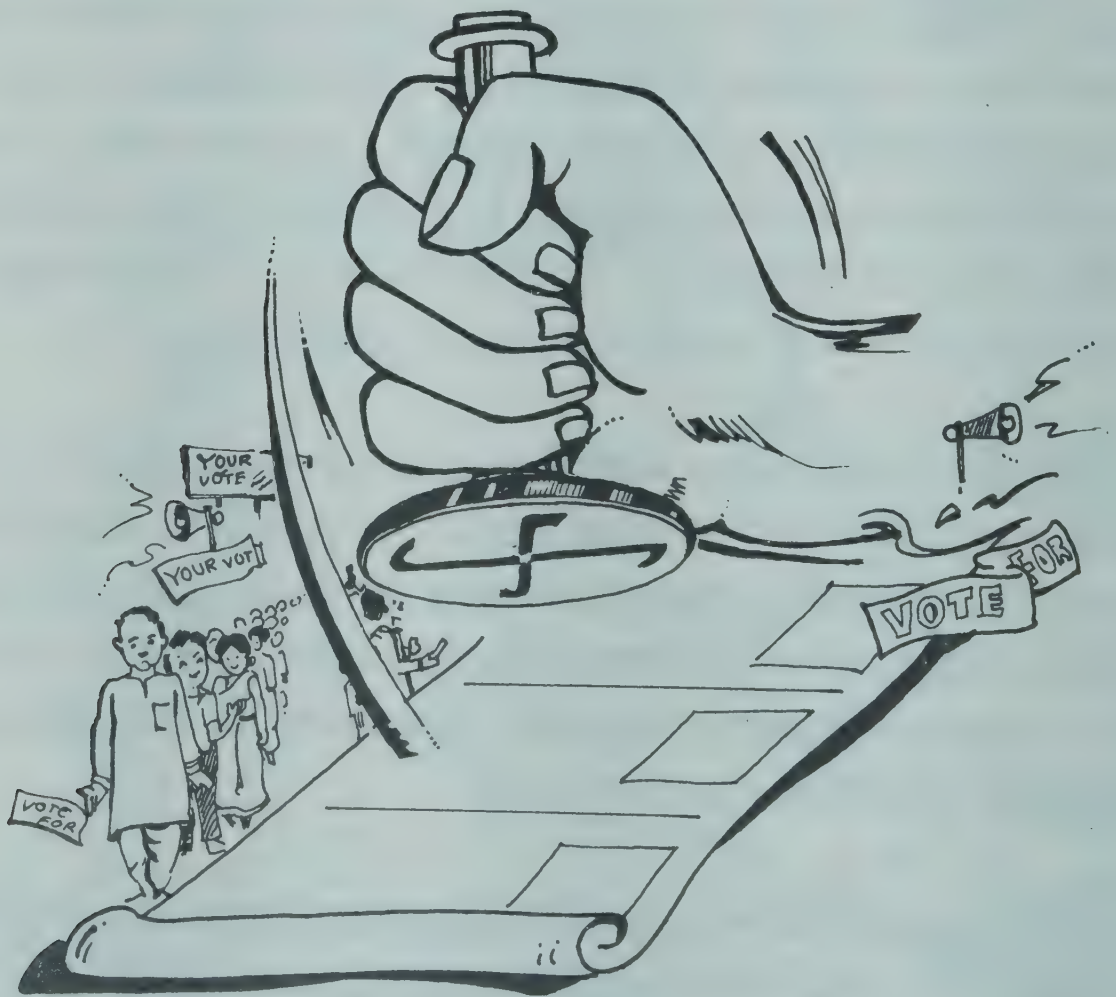
The election process is not followed properly due to the lack of adequate training of the polling staff. An election involves a lot of intricate proceedings - thus there is a need of a thorough knowledge of the process by the officers involved/engaged in the process. The common sense is not applied by the staff and they pass the problem to the higher official and each problem is taken technically. This creates a lot of confusion-this makes a simple thing a complex one. They behave like government officers rather than representatives of the election commission. There is a lack of knowledge of election rules among contestants and supporters.

The chief election commissioner is appointed by the President on the recommendation of the political executive. This way the appointment becomes a political one. Political affiliation is involved in some stages of the process. Other election commissioners are also appointed in the process, without any constitutional security.

The deputy election commissioners are appointed against cadre posts out of the securing bureaucrats. This way the ruling party appoints the favorable officers whenever and wherever the centre desires and also can transfer an officer, if he/she is unfavourable.

The election commission does not have a secretariat of its own and with independent service rules. The commissions officials are subjected to UPSC, CAT, Vigilance Commission and other institutions like this governing the servants of the union. The loyalty of the Chief Electoral Officer, Returning officer, Law and Order machinery is divided among the Election Commission and the government. This is why the election commission cannot exercise its power fully on them.

The election commission does not have any concrete right to stop the interference of the ruling party from time to time. Fragile law to control the role of money power and to punish the electoral offender also affects the work of the election commission.

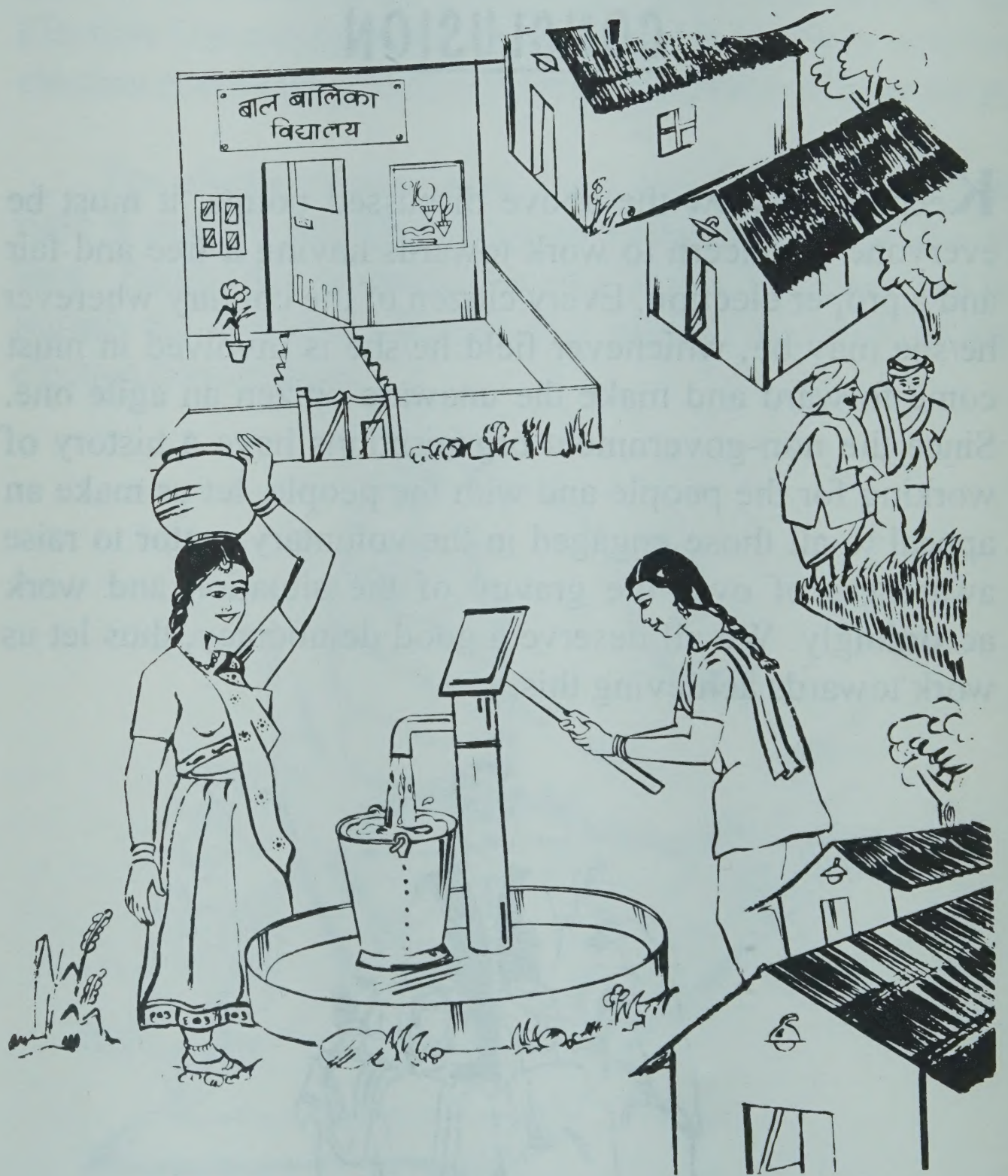


Do not be misled by false propoganda — do not be swayed by populist programmes.

CONCLUSION

Keeping in view the above discussed points, it must be everyone's concern to work towards having a free and fair and a proper election. Every citizen of the country wherever he/she may be, whichever field he/she is involved in must come forward and make the unaware citizen an agile one. Since the non-government organisations have a history of working for the people and with the people, let us make an appeal to all those engaged in the voluntary sector to raise awareness of over the gravity of the situation and work accordingly. We all deserve a good democracy, thus let us work towards achieving this.





Making of any false declaration in connection with the preparation or revision of an electoral roll or the inclusion of entry in or from an electoral roll is an offence under section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

— *Election Commission*

WHAT A VOTER MUST KNOW

- Anyone who is 18 years old on 1st January of the election year, is eligible to vote.
- If eligible, immediately register as a voter.
- Use of religious place or historical monuments for electioneering is prohibited.
- In the event of any irregularities immediately inform the polling officer.
- **ILLEGAL :**
 - Campaigning on the basis of caste and religion.
 - Campaigning within 48 hours of election.
 - Camps of candidates within 200 metres of the polling booth.
 - Candidate's vehicles carrying the voters to the polling station. Avoid such facilities, if offered.
- Every two kilometre a polling booth is set up.
- Generally voting takes place from 8 am to 5 pm.

**RIGHT TO VOTE IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT
USE IT WITH DIGNITY AND DILIGENCE**

***FOR FURTHER INFORMATION YOU MAY CONTACT
THE ELECTION COMMISSION, VANI OR VHAI.***

Published in public interest by



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